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Prof. Dusseault

Art 3910

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Artifact Analysis

This artifact in physical form is a round plastic canister about an inch and a half in height and close to an inch in diameter with an opening protected by a firm brush. The outside consists of the brand logo (Fujifilm), film iso number (400), number of exposures (24), barcode, and general green/white/black color scheme. Inside is a thin plastic layer of film emulsion rolled tightly around a column. The film emulsion contains gelatin emulsion and silver halide crystals that are light sensitive. This variant of film in particular is known as Fuji 400, or Fujifilm 400. I received this roll from a photo shop in Douglasville, Georgia, called The Photo Spot. The country of origin in unknown as according to the barcode list, this product is “restricted distribution.” The film emulsion within this roll is currently unexposed but has the ability to change when exposed to light. The light reacts with the film in order to get a result. Once exposed, there will be a photo stored within the film only to be viewed once the proper chemicals are mixed with it.

Early Film and other ways of composing images were originally much larger than this canister. The photos from photographer William Henry Fox Talbot during the 1800’s for instance, were much larger in size, multiple feet in length and width. Developing these photos was different from today’s techniques and used salted papers developed through calotype processing. Medium format film followed large format continually growing smaller and eventually became the most widely used film from 1900-1950. In 1934, Kodak Eastman introduced a 35mm 135 daylight-loading single use cassette. This represented the smaller side of medium format film, was the most commonly used film by the 60’s, and resembles the cartridges and 35mm film that is used today including Fuji 400.

My choice to start using film came during the Summer of 2014 and was my first introduction to photography and film photography. Knowing that I wanted to gain a strong understanding of photography and the conception of photos, I figured that starting with the basics of film and an all mechanical film camera would help me better understand all the factors that contribute to a photo being created. Paired with a Nikon FE2 from 1987, Fuji 400 and other film became my canvas for painting photos. Due to not being able to immediately view a photo after making it and being limited to 24 exposures on a roll of film, shooting film taught me to think hard about the photo I was about to create and to adjust all settings according to the exposure. Primarily, I take photos of my group of friends, surrounding landscapes, cityscapes, and nature. Because of the dedication to mechanics that film requires, it has had such an impact on me creatively that I always try to get the most out of my compositions no matter where I am, even as I shoot mostly digital today. I still fully shoot on manual mode and with my DSLR and generally take a photos to get them right the first time rather than taking multiple photos and adjusting as I go along.

Culturally, film photography has changed drastically throughout the last century. Film became standard in the photo industry, used in everything from hobbies and wedding photography to landscape and commercial photography. The first digital camera was developed in 1975 but didn’t go on to fully shape the industry until around 25 years later in the early 2000’s. By then, film was just about phased out due to performance and convenience of DSLR’s. Digital cameras have since ruled the industry and continue to be the primary mode of photography. There have always been people who refused to stop shooting film, but, more recently there seems to have been a resurgence in film photography as a hobby. Film photography offers a vintage and nostalgic feeling that some individuals often seek. With the escalation of social media, such portrayal of this feeling within art has been made attainable for showcasing, so easily composed with just an SLR camera and a roll of film. This certainly explains why so many people in recent years have bought a film camera and begun shooting film, including myself. Due to the grain on the film emulsion, 35mm photography allows for a type of photo to be created that a digital sensor can’t quite mimic and also helps foster a true understanding of all the factors that play a role in composing a photo.

Sources

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